

rain is a technicolor film by meikusa (orphan_account)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Aged-Up Character(s), Bittersweet, Byeler - Freeform, Developing Relationship, Ficlet, Fluff without Plot, Love Confessions, M/M, Mike Wheeler Loves Will Byers, Mike-Centric, No Plot, References to Depression, Slice of Life, They're 17/18? I think?, just feelings

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Summary:

"They don't say anything. Maybe they should—maybe if it was anyone else—but they've never needed to speak to communicate. Mike smiles back, eyes crinkling, and just like that they're—

Whatever they are. Whatever they've always been, maybe."

Mike looks at what's right in front of him.

rain is a technicolor film

When Will kisses Mike, the rain is loud on the roof and his heart is quiet in his chest. It's been quiet for a while, steady, and maybe Will should have realised weeks or months ago.

Maybe he should have kissed Mike weeks or months ago.

-

Or he could have kissed him after Will came back, alive, either time
—

In the grocery store, late night—

In the Byers' kitchen, that feels like home—

On Christmas—

At Castle Byers—

I know.

I know you.

(I love you.)

A hundred times, a hundred places, a hundred stepping stones to here. Now. Will's lips soft and full, the taste of buttery shortbread cookies between them.

It's magical the same way that raindrops in summer are, or a butterfly perched on a flower petal, or the shimmer of a rainbow reflected on the wall. Ordinary and special all at once. It feels like it lasts for an instant and an eternity. Time exists just for them; just for this; just for being together.

When they pull apart, they don't go far. Will is boxed in by Mike and the kitchen counter, but he doesn't seem worried about it. His eyes dart over Will's face, like he can't quite believe what he's seeing. Like he can't quite trust that it's real. He smiles, soft and easy, and reaches up, thumb at the edge of Mike's jaw.

They don't say anything. Maybe they should—maybe if it was anyone else—but they've never needed to speak to communicate. Mike smiles back, eyes crinkling, and just like that they're—

Whatever they are. Whatever they've always been, maybe.

“Why now?” Mike asks.

It's a fair question; there is nothing special about tonight. But maybe that's the point. He gave Will a key to his heart a long time ago. He's not sure when exactly Will let himself in and made himself at home, but he's there now, always there, and Mike can't imagine him ever being anywhere else.

So why now?

"I don't know," Will says. "It just felt right."

(A lot of things feel right.)

But now, a lot of things matter. *Will* matters. He's reached a point where he knows that. His own happiness—being okay—it's important.

And somewhere along the way—between long arcade shifts and lazy pizza nights and *trauma upon trauma*—Mike started needing Will just as much. All of the extended party members—the little family they've made for themselves—but Will especially. His best friend, his partner, his voice of reason (even if the others might laugh to hear Mike call him that; even if Will might laugh.) He thinks he might have lost himself a long time ago if not for Will.

And it's equal; it's always been equal. Whatever he takes, he gives back. Whatever Will offers, Mike showers him with it in return. When Mike is adrift, Will is steady. And when Will loses his own footing, his hand is right there, ready to pull him back up. They've stumbled apart a few times—bad times, for both of them—but they always find their way back together.

“I thought... I mean, I wasn’t sure...” Mike shakes his head; a hard reset, and he feels the tears burning, threatening to spill over. His words are surer when he tries again. “I didn’t know if you’d ever be ready.”

It’s not: *I didn’t know you felt the same.*

Or: *I didn’t know if you wanted this.*

It’s: *I didn’t know if you’d ever be ready.*

“I’m not sure I know how to be ready,” Will admits. He looks away, and out the small window in the kitchen, and in the darkness finds only the reflection of himself and Mike staring back. The rain on the window blurs the image, makes it feel not-quite-real. It makes it easy to confess, to sort through the feelings in his chest and turn them into words. “But... the other day, my mom told me that one morning I’ll wake up and losing myself won’t be the first thing I think about.”

“This morning?”

Quiet, like there is something between them that Mike doesn’t want to break. Will looks back at him; with those clear green brown eyes, slightly parted lips, that perfect smudge of blue paint on his brow. Curiosity and wonder and—hope, maybe.

Will takes a breath and that too is quiet, steady, matched by the rise and fall of Mike's chest in front of him. The words come easier than expected when he says, "I woke up thinking about you."

He didn't decide then that he would kiss Will today. He didn't even decide that he would kiss Will at all, honestly, it was just... another moment. Another stepping stone.

And Will has this way of smiling when he really means it—when it has been pulled out of him without warning. Soft and quiet and a little bit bashful, like he can't believe that he's allowed to feel happy. Loved. He ducks his head a little, hiding, like he's afraid to let himself feel it because at any second it might get ripped away.

Mike presses into the space between them—what little of it there is—and kisses him again. There is no instant this time; it stretches out, insistent, maybe a little bit desperate. *It's real. I love you. I'm not going anywhere.* It feels too soon to say the words, but Mike can show him. He can put everything and more into this connection between them and hope that Will feels it too.

It's real. I love you. I'm not going anywhere.

Will presses back, and outside the rain is loud still. It beats on the roof and lashes against the windows, wind howling in anguished symphony. But inside—the night is warm and syrupy-slow. Mike's heart beats quiet, steady, matched to the rhythm of Will's.

Familiar. Comforting.

Right.